



Many teen jobs involve multiple tasks. Give teens clear instructions for each task, especially new and unfamiliar ones.

Work with your young employees to identify potential hazards and train them how to do job tasks safely. For example, review steps for proper lifting and the correct use of tools and equipment; explain what equipment and tasks they are prohibited from using or doing according to child labor laws; discuss what to do in the case of a spill or other problem.

Depending on the job, personal protective equipment such as goggles, safety shoes, hard hats, gloves, or other clothing may help protect against injuries and may even be required by law. Make appropriate protective equipment accessible and train teens on how to use equipment properly.

4. Provide Health and Safety Training

5. Provide Effective Supervision

Make sure front-line supervisors who give work assignments know the laws. Supervisors and older employees should set good examples by following safety rules. Supervisors should observe teens working to see that they are doing tasks as trained.

Create an atmosphere that encourages teens to speak up when there is a problem or instructions are unclear. Teens may be reluctant to let others know when they don't understand something. Interviews with injured teens reveal that often they are injured when trying to do more than they have been trained to do.

6. Prepare Teens for Emergencies

Every worker should be ready to handle emergencies. Show your young employees escape routes and explain what to do in the event of fire, a potentially violent situation, or other emergency. Teens also need to know what to do and where to go if an injury should occur. This information should be written and accessible to employees.

7. Establish a Health and Safety Committee

Set up a health and safety committee that meets regularly to identify hazards and address problems. Include teen and adult employees and management on your committee. Employees know their jobs and workplaces well and often have insightful ideas about injury prevention.

8. Post the Child Labor Laws

The inside of this pamphlet is a poster containing information about child labor laws. Hang the poster where employees can see it.

Identify potential hazards. Include a review of where injuries have occurred in the past. Eliminate hazards whenever possible. This can often be accomplished through redesign of work areas, tasks, or equipment and does not necessarily require expensive technology.

3. Identify and Eliminate Hazards

Permits are required for all teens under 18 even if they have graduated or are no longer attending school.

Before beginning a new job, a teen must obtain a work permit from the school department where he or she lives. In Massachusetts these are called "employment permits" for 14 and 15 year olds and "educational certificates" for 16 and 17 year olds. Employers must keep completed permits on site until the teen no longer works for you. At that time, send the permit or certificate back to the school department that issued it.

2. Make Sure Teens Have Work Permits

Understanding and complying with state and federal child labor laws and occupational safety and health regulations protects you and your employees. The child labor laws prohibit teens from performing certain hazardous tasks. Health and safety regulations that apply to your business cover all employees regardless of age.

1. Know the Laws

Employers' Steps to Safer Teen Jobs

Ideas From Other Employers

Here are some examples of safety practices that are being used successfully by employers of teens across the country.

- Different-colored smocks are issued to employees under age 18 at a chain of convenience stores so supervisors know who is not allowed to operate the electric meat slicer.
- A California zoo assigns each new teen worker a "buddy" or mentor. This mentor answers questions, helps give hands-on training and offers safety tips.
- Some employers place bright red warning stickers on equipment which teens may not legally operate or clean. (Stickers are available from the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division while supplies last.)
- A fast-food employer developed a computerized scheduling program to ensure that teens under age 16 aren't scheduled for too many hours during school weeks.
- At their monthly safety meetings, a retail clothing chain with many young employees has workers act out specific health and safety problems and then come up with solutions to the problems.
- One employer, with 31 pizza restaurants in Virginia, took the unusual step of posting signs offering a \$100 reward to workers under 18 who report that they had been asked to perform hazardous jobs.



For many teens, work is a rewarding experience. However, work also has risks. Each year in the U.S., more than 210,000 teens are injured on the job, about a third of whom are hurt badly enough to seek emergency room treatment.

There is a lot Massachusetts employers can do to prevent injuries to your teen workers. Making an extra effort to eliminate hazards, providing ongoing training and supervision, and involving employees in a prevention program can go a long way toward reducing injuries and illnesses, building morale, and lowering workers' compensation costs.

This pamphlet provides information about Massachusetts and federal labor laws. It includes ideas for creating a safe and healthful workplace and lists resources to contact for more information or assistance.

Employers

A Message for Massachusetts



Massachusetts
Employers' Guide

Young Worker Health & Safety and the Child Labor Laws



Massachusetts Child Labor Laws*

Legal Work Hours for Teens in Massachusetts

14 and 15 Year Olds

Work Hours

Only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. during the school year
Not during school hours
Only between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. during the summer (from July 1 through Labor Day)

Maximum Hours When School Is in Session

18 hours a week
3 hours a day on school days
8 hours a day Saturday, Sunday, holidays
6 days a week

Maximum Hours When School Is Not in Session

40 hours a week
8 hours a day
6 days a week

16 and 17 Year Olds

Work Hours

Only between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. (except in restaurants until midnight on Fridays, Saturdays, and during school vacation)
Maximum Hours of Work – Whether or Not School is in Session
48 hours a week
9 hours a day
6 days a week

Persons under 16 years old may NOT:

- Operate power-driven machinery (except office machines or machines in retail or food service not otherwise prohibited)
- Operate hoisting apparatus
- Cook (except at soda fountains, lunch counters, snack bars, or cafeteria serving counters) or bake
- Work in a manufacturing facility (e.g., a factory)
- Work on ladders or scaffolds
- Work in freezers or meat coolers
- Work in garages except dispensing gas and oil
- Work in brick or lumber yards
- Work in barber shops
- Work in amusement places (e.g., pool or billiard rooms, or bowling alley)
- Work in construction, transportation, communications, or public utilities (except doing clerical work away from heavy machinery)
- Work in warehouses (except doing clerical work)
- Load or unload trucks, railroad cars, conveyors
- Wash windows in public or commercial buildings if the window sill is more than 10 feet above the ground
- Work doing laundry in a commercial laundry or dry cleaning establishment
- Work as a public messenger
- Work at processing operations (e.g., in meat, fish, or poultry processing or cracking nuts)
- Work in mining
- Work around boilers or in engine rooms
- Do industrial homework
- Work that is determined by the Massachusetts Attorney General to be dangerous to the health and well-being of minors
- **Work in any of the occupations prohibited for persons under age 18**

Persons under 18 years old may NOT:

- Drive a vehicle or forklift
- Use meat slicers or power-driven bakery machines
- Work 30 feet or more above ground or water
- Handle, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages
- Use circular or band saws, guillotine shears, or box crushers
- Use power-driven woodworking machines
- Use power-driven hoisting apparatus
- Use power-driven paper-products machines
- Use power-driven metal-forming, punching, or shearing machines
- Use buffing or polishing equipment
- Manufacture brick, tile, or kindred products
- Manufacture or store explosives
- Work in wrecking, demolition, shipbreaking, or excavation
- Work in logging, or sawmilling, mining (other than coal)
- Work slaughtering, packing, or processing meat
- Work in roofing, railway, or excavation operations
- Work in foundries or around blast furnaces
- Work manufacturing phosphorus matches
- Work where they are exposed to radioactive substances
- Work as a firefighter or engineer on a boat
- Oil or clean hazardous machinery in motion

Persons under 14 may not work.

There are a few exceptions to this such as working as news carriers, on farms, and in entertainment (with a special permit).

All teens under 18 must obtain employment permits or educational certificates from the school departments where they live.

Resources for More Information

For questions about wages or child labor laws:

Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Fair Labor and Business Practices Division 617-727-3465; www.ago.state.ma.us
U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division 617-624-6700; www.dol.gov/esa/whd

For questions about workers' compensation:

Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents 800-323-3249 x470; www.state.ma.us/dia

For questions about health and safety:

U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
Methuen Office - 617-565-8110
Braintree Office - 617-565-6924
Springfield Office - 413-785-0123
www.osha.gov
Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Surveillance Program
617-624-5632; www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/ohsp/ohsp.htm

*This is a compilation of state and federal child labor laws. The most protective laws are presented here and apply to all employers of teens including parents who may employ their children. There are additional regulations and some exceptions for employers in agricultural industries.

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